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## ABSTRACT

The Eastfield (Texas) College "Writing across the Curriculum Mentor Project" began in spring 1986 with the objective of involving the entire Eastfield faculty in working toward the improvement of student writing in all subject areas. English faculty would serve as mentors to all other faculty to assist in developing writing assignments, grading techniques, and essay testing, depending upon the student writing requirements of the individual faculty members. The project was developed in four phases: (1) the project developers interviewed all full-time English faculty members to determine the feasibility of the project and their willingness to participate as mentors; (2) interviews were conducted with the entire non-English teaching faculty to determine their willingness to participate in the project; (3) an informational workshop presented for interested faculty to increase awareness and encourage participation was followed by a pilot testing of the project in spring 1987 with six faculty in the disciplines of management, economics, drafting, child development, mathematics, and physical education; and (4) the project will phase in gradually as English faculty work with colleagues to develop writing tasks for their particular courses. Faculty questionnaires and a report on the surveys are included. (EJV)

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"Writing Across the Curriculum"  
The Mentor Project

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## Writing Across the Curriculum:

### The Mentor Project

The Eastfield College "Writing Across the Curriculum Mentor Project" began in the Spring of 1986. The major objective of the project was to involve the entire Eastfield faculty in working toward the improvement of student writing in all subject areas. English faculty would serve as mentors to all other faculty to assist in developing writing assignments, grading techniques, and essay testing, depending on the student writing requirements of the individual faculty member. Funded by Instructional Development funds, the project was developed in four phases.

#### Phase One

The project developers, Diane Martin Jordan and Michael Moorhead, interviewed all full-time English faculty members at length to determine the feasibility of a campus-wide Writing Across the Curriculum Mentor Project and their willingness to participate as mentors or content experts for eight or nine colleagues in other disciplines. The developers designed two questionnaires (one for English faculty; one for other disciplines) to solicit the faculty response. Jordan and Moorhead projected that English faculty would be instrumental in the planning and implementation of a mentor/colleague project.

The English faculty response to the questionnaire was positive and enthusiastic. Several instructors had reservations concerning logistics, load inequities, and academic freedom, but all felt the project did have merit.

### Phase Two

Jordan and Moorhead interviewed the entire non-English teaching faculty to determine their willingness to participate in the Writing Across the Curriculum Mentor Project and discovered from the results of the interviews that most non-English faculty were receptive to the mentor idea and were interested in a specific proposal to participate in the Writing Across the Curriculum Mentor Project in the fall of 1986.

### Phase Three

In the fall of 1986, Jordan and Moorhead presented an informational workshop for interested faculty, the object of which was to increase awareness of the Writing Across the Curriculum Mentor Project and to encourage participation. Jordan and Moorhead piloted the project in the spring of 1987 with six faculty in the disciplines of management, economics, drafting, child development, mathematics, and physical education.

### Phase Four

The project will phase in gradually as all interested English faculty work with colleagues in developing writing tasks for their particular courses. Writing activities, developing essay tests, and grading student writing are areas of concern.

This Writing Across the Curriculum proposal will also aid in the implementation of the Dallas County Community College District Common Learning course requirements which mandate Writing Across the Curriculum.

## Project Products

1. Two attached interview questionnaires used during individual interviews:
  - a. Mentor Project Questionnaire (English Faculty)
  - b. Mentor Project Questionnaire (Non-English Faculty)
2. Progress reports on each phase of the process:
  - a. English faculty interviews
  - b. Non-English faculty interviews
3. A final report on results of the questionnaires.
4. A faculty workshop on the project (January, 1987).
5. English Division workshops as project is phased in.
6. Brochure on the project to be distributed campus-wide and on other DCCCD campuses.
7. Final report.
8. Mentor Project Questionnaire Survey Results.

## MENTOR PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

### ENGLISH FACULTY

Using a #2 pencil, please mark on the ScanTron form the answer that most closely corresponds with your opinion.

Scale for responses: A=Yes B=Probably C=Maybe D=Doubtfully E=No

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1. Writing well is an ability I expect all my students to exhibit.
2. The teaching of writing is primarily the responsibility of the English faculty.
3. I would welcome the opportunity to assist non-English faculty with their writing assignments for 20% of my teaching load.
4. I am familiar with the Common Learning Committee recommendations concerning Writing Across the Curriculum.
5. I agree with the philosophy of Writing Across the Curriculum.
6. I would work to implement the Mentor Project if I were included in the planning of the program.

## MENTOR PROJECT QUESTIONNAIRE

### NON-ENGLISH FACULTY

Using a #2 pencil, please mark on the ScanTron form the answer that most closely corresponds with your opinion.

Scale for responses: A=Yes B=Probably C=Maybe D=Doubtfully E=No

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1. Writing well is an ability I expect all my students to exhibit.
2. It is difficult for me to teach writing in my classes.
3. Teaching writing is my responsibility.
4. I give mostly short answer exams.
5. I give essay questions on exams.
6. I assign a variety of writing projects in my courses.
7. The teaching of writing is primarily the responsibility of the English faculty.
8. I would welcome the assistance of the English faculty in my preparation of tests and essay assignments.
9. I would assign more writing if I were provided some assistance by the English faculty.
10. I am familiar with the Common Learning Committee recommendations concerning Writing Across the Curriculum.
11. I agree with the philosophy of Writing Across the Curriculum.

## Mentor Project . . . Final Report

We must admit that our original projections concerning this project were unrealistic and not altogether possible. Therefore, this final report will advocate a scaling down of these first expectations to much more realistic recommendations along with a wish to be able to expand the project in the future in the direction of our original projections. But first, we must comment on the results of the questionnaire.

We can generalize from the statistical information we have received at the completion of our interviews of non-English faculty that fifty plus percent are interested in having students do some writing in their classes. Seventy-four percent of the non-English faculty agreed with the philosophy of Writing Across the Curriculum, but only five percent would assign more writing if they were provided some assistance by the English faculty. Of the faculty indicating an interest in assistance from an English instructor in preparing writing assignments for classes, most admitted they would not adopt a wider range of writing assignments (because of curricular demands or the time factor in relaying information). These relatively modest percentages on key questions indicated to us a need to reduce the scope of our Mentor Project plans. An equal number (thirty-one percent) felt that the teaching of writing was definitely the responsibility of the English faculty. Similar strong split feelings among the faculty were registered on questions concerning the nature of assigned writing projects and the use of mostly short answer exam questions. A significant majority (sixty percent) agreed that writing well

was an ability expected of all students; most (fifty percent) felt that it was difficult to teach writing in their classes. This implies a strong NEED for our proposed mentor approach. "Teaching writing is my responsibility" was the question which showed the most disagreement among non-English faculty: twenty-six percent answered Yes, twenty-one percent answered Probably, nineteen percent answered Maybe, ten percent answered Doubtfully, and twenty-three percent answered No.

We believe that part of our responsibility as English instructors is to enable non-English instructors to use writing as a learning tool in imparting the curriculum, not (as they suppose) adding extra work for themselves and students in requiring more writing. Part of our task is re-educating those interested faculty and those "maybe" types to integrate writing in the curriculum rather than separate it from the curriculum and view it only as a testing activity. They need to be educated to learn that writing is the best way for a student to integrate thinking and to synthesize subject matter in order to reach the pinnacle of Maslow's hierarchy. Isn't that what we are ALL striving for . . . synthesis of subject matter?

Based upon the results of our survey, we recommend implementation of the Mentor Project during the 1987 spring semester on a limited basis. We hope to assist two non-English faculty each; we hope to discuss a variety of possible writing assignments, assist in the preparation of discussion exam questions and other writing assignments, and formulate a simple, straightforward system of writing evaluation. We intend to keep the rest of the English faculty informed of the progress and difficulties of this project and expand it semester by semester as the successes of the project are made known and as

instructors, both English and non-English alike, indicate a desire to be included.

Toward the conclusion of the 1986 fall semester, we will distribute the results of our questionnaire-survey to the entire Eastfield faculty. The workshop previously planned for the English faculty will be held to inform them of our progress and to elicit from them suggestions and recommendations about the project.

Mentor Project Questionnaire  
Survey Results

Non-English Faculty

Using a #2 pencil, please mark on the ScanTron form the answer that most closely corresponds with your opinion.

Scale for responses: A=Yes B=Probably C=Maybe D=Doubtfully E=No

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1. Writing well is an ability I expect all my students to exhibit.  
A=60% B=16% C=10% D=3% E=11%
  2. It is difficult for me to teach writing in my classes.  
A=50% B=15% C=11% D=2% E=21%
  3. Teaching writing is my responsibility.  
A=26% B=21% C=19% D=10% E=23%
  4. I give mostly short answer exams.  
A=40% B=3% C=10% D=0% E=47%
  5. I give essay questions on exams.  
A=52% B=2% C=16% D=0% E=31%
  6. I assign a variety of writing projects in my courses.  
A=40% B=6% C=6% D=8% E=39%
  7. The teaching of writing is primarily the responsibility of the English faculty.  
A=31% B=21% C=16% D=2% E=31%
  8. I would welcome the assistance of the English faculty in my preparation of tests and essay assignments.  
A=34% B=5% C=19% D=18% E=23%
  9. I would assign more writing if I were provided some assistance by the English faculty.  
A=5% B=3% C=15% D=19% E=56%
  10. I am familiar with the Common Learning Committee recommendations concerning Writing Across the Curriculum.  
A=69% B=11% C=11% D=2% E=6%
  11. I agree with the philosophy of Writing Across the Curriculum.  
A=74% B=11% C=13% D=2% E=0%

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